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## III. NOTES ON COLONIES AND COLONIAL GOVERNMENT

**The Philippine Situation.**—The recent legislation by Congress has proved a great disappointment to those interested in the re-establishment of Philippine prosperity. Of the measures of permanent relief urgently required, only a currency law was passed. At the close of the last year the Philippine commission reported that an unusually depressed condition existed throughout the archipelago and that a serious economic crisis had set in. By the war and the rinderpest, especially the latter, the carabaos or water buffaloes have been reduced to 10 per cent of their former number. The chief food of the common people is rice and the carabao is not only indispensable to the cultivation of rice under the present methods, but is also the principal means of transportation for the tobacco, hemp and other crops. Besides the enormous loss involved in the destruction of the animals themselves, the natives have therefore had to face a loss of 75 per cent in the production of rice. Following this has come a destructive pest of locusts throughout the Visayan islands and in Luzon, the principal grain supplies being found in the latter island.

In a previous number of *THE ANNALS* the steady fall in the value of silver was pointed out, with the resulting loss to the common people as well as to the government. The commission calculates that it has lost from this source alone about \$950,000.

Finally, as if to repeat the scourges inflicted in olden time upon the Egyptians, a plague of cholera has ravaged the northern island in the group and although the most vigorous measures were adopted to reduce its spread in the city of Manila and elsewhere, the commission estimates that about 100,000 victims will fall before this latest and greatest calamity. The sanitary restrictions introduced by the government have been misunderstood by the more ignorant classes, who are told that the disease is the effect of poisonous powders dropped into the wells by American soldiers for the purpose of destroying the people.

Trade with the United States has been at a low ebb, even the slight reduction in the customs duties, authorized by previous legislation, failing of its object, only \$11,000 of duties in five months being collected on the trade with the United States. The commission therefore urges:

1. The establishment of the gold standard upon the plan recommended in a former report and the issuance of circulating bank notes under proper safeguards.

2. A reduction of at least 75 per cent of the Dingley rates of duties upon goods imported into the United States from the Philippine Islands.

3. An amendment of the Philippine act so that the limit on lands which may be sold to individuals or corporations from the public domain shall be increased to 25,000 acres, or at least that the government be given power to lease for sixty years, upon competitive bidding, tracts from the public land aggregating not more than 30,000 acres to any one individual or corporation.

4. That the prohibition forbidding an individual or corporation from holding an interest in more than one mining claim be repealed.

5. The exemption, from American taxation, of bonds issued by the insular government.

6. An amendment to the Chinese exclusion act giving power to the government to admit a limited number of skilled Chinese laborers into the Philippine Islands on the bond of the employer that he will employ a Filipino apprentice for every such laborer within five years after the admission of the laborer to the country and the payment of a head tax of not exceeding fifty dollars for each Chinaman so admitted.

Concerning the reduction of tariff duties on imports into the Philippines the commission points out that no fears need be entertained of Philippine tobacco or other commodities being dumped upon the American market in such quantities as to affect the home interests, while, on the other hand, the ability to sell in the United States will be of the utmost necessity in re-establishing agricultural conditions in the archipelago. All the reasons which were successfully urged in favor of free trade between Porto Rico and the United States apply with added strength to our larger Eastern dependency. The islands have lost their Spanish markets since the cession to the United States and our market therefore forms the only substitute which they may reasonably expect. On the question of allowing a larger portion of the public domain to be sold to individuals, it is shown that over 65,000,000 acres out of the 70,000,000 in the archipelago are owned by the government. There can, therefore, be no danger that the land might fall into the hands of a few individuals or corporations if the limit were raised to the amount suggested; namely 25,000 acres. The government of the islands is land poor and the sale of land to individuals and corporations who will invest their money in improving it, the commission believes to be one of the greatest boons that could happen, not only to the government alone, but to the people generally. The present limit of 2,500 acres prevents entirely the investment of new capital in the sugar and tobacco industries and thereby also renders impossible the development of railway enterprises, since these are naturally connected with the growth of the sugar and tobacco plantations. So great is the importance attached to this factor in the situation that the commission declares "no greater obstacle to the permanent improvement of economic conditions here (exists) than the present restriction upon the amount of land that can be held."

The same general considerations apply to the well-meant but unpractical restriction prohibiting the ownership of an interest in two mining claims by the same person or corporation. Says the commission: "It will paralyze all enterprise, taking away from prospecting capitalists all interest in the mineral wealth to be found here unless some method of evading the restriction can be devised." The commission does not concur in the view that it would be wise to admit unskilled labor from China into the islands. The objections to such a policy are diverse, the most important being that the unskilled laborers do not enter agriculture, where the demand for labor is strongest. The Chinese laborer becomes a merchant within a year or two after he reaches the archipelago and sets up a competition with the Filipino, which in the end drives the latter out of business. With unlimited Chinese immigration into the

islands Governor Taft believes that the Filipino would be relegated to the position which the Malay now occupies in the Straits Settlements. Most of the avenues of business would be commanded by the Chinamen. The islands would become a Chinese rather than a Filipino country. While admitting that the entrance of large numbers of Chinese would tend toward a much more rapid commercial and industrial development of the islands, the governor declares that this development would be at the expense of the Filipino people and the latter he considers justified in resenting such a suggestion. The commission as a whole believes, however, that there are not sufficient *skilled* laborers among the Filipinos to meet the emergencies in the construction work immediately necessary for the development of the islands. It is expected that shipyards and other industrial enterprises would be established were there a supply of skilled labor, even though the labor were slightly more expensive than that of the United States. The introduction of these skilled workmen would necessarily entail some government supervision to enforce the necessary restrictions

The provincial governments have, upon the whole, worked well. It has not been possible in many of the provinces to make substantial improvements of the roads and bridges owing to the shortage of revenue and it seems likely that contributions from the insular treasury will be necessary to bring this about. The principal difficulties in local administration have arisen over the execution of the tax laws. The assessments have naturally been tinged with partiality and the ignorance of the injured has been an important factor in the situation, but it is thought that by securing greater publicity and some amendments to the methods now in vogue, the gravest abuses may be abolished. The native governors of the provinces are reported to have given considerable satisfaction to the commission. The provincial governor is the disciplinarian of the municipal *presidente* or mayor. He is obliged to supervise the local administration of the latter and of the municipal council. When the Philippine commission appointed natives to this important position it was feared by some that too much power had perhaps been vested in these officials, but the experience of the last year especially has shown this fear to be ungrounded.

The civil service board reports about two thousand appointments made during the year. The examinations for promotion, which form an important feature of all grades of the service, are still being carried on with satisfactory results. The rules have been extended to cover two thousand positions heretofore not within their scope. Very few violations of the act are reported. The constabulary, numbering about five thousand men, has supplanted the American army in the preservation of peace in those sections where civil government is established. There are still large numbers of *ladrones* recruited from the criminal classes and from those who are loath to leave the restless habits cultivated by the war. Curiously enough it has been found that *ladronism* flourishes in some of the most important and fertile parts of the islands, for example, in the province of Cavite. The constabulary officers here have been unable to stamp out the evil and even the municipal police are supplied with rifles with great reluctance because of the danger that the

same may be stolen. Abuses by members of the constabulary are reported in considerable numbers. The commissioner of police points out that Filipinos of the lower classes, when given a little authority, are prone to use their power to oppress their fellows; it is said that the abuses in the police force noted above are committed almost wholly by native members of that body who are not under the immediate observation and control of American inspectors.

The postal and telegraphic communications are somewhat unevenly developed, the latter having far outstripped the former. There are now over 160 regular post-offices in the islands and the use of the mails has been growing very rapidly, but the telegraphic service has been extended to all the capitals of the Christianized provinces except two and to all the principal towns of Mindanao and the Jolo group. Needless to say the efficiency of the police and of the government at large is greatly promoted by this service.

A number of embarrassing religious questions have arisen which have necessarily placed the American officials in a delicate position. Aside from the continuance of the friar land question, there have also arisen local difficulties of a factional nature in different congregations. The most important of these is the case of Father Aglipay, a Roman Catholic priest, who has fallen into conflict with the hierarchy of the church. The controversy has assumed such considerable proportions as to lead to the formation of a so-called Independent Filipino Catholic Church on the occasion of the refusal of the Vatican to withdraw the Spanish friars from the island. Padre Aglipay has assumed the title of archbishop and appointed a number of native priests as bishops, and a peculiarly unfortunate and embarrassing conflict over the church property has developed. The governor has been obliged to intervene in this controversy in order to maintain order, and, in preventing the new faction from assuming forcible control of some of the churches and church property, he has found it difficult to avoid the appearance of partiality. In one instance the women of a parish, in the temporary absence of the regular priest, took possession of the church, obtaining the keys, and admitted Father Aglipay, who celebrated mass. The property could only be restored to the regular church organization upon the active intercession of the civil authorities.